

Firefighter Testing System

CANDIDATE HANDOUT



Introduction

This handout is designed to help you prepare for the NTN Firefighter Testing System. This handout discusses the main parts of the testing process including:

- Firefighter Testing System components
- General test taking strategies and ways to avoid common errors

The information provided in this handout is meant to be helpful and prepare you for the general nature of the process. The handout includes a general overview of each part of the selection process, general strategies for effective preparation and test-taking, and descriptions of procedures and materials you will encounter during each part of the selection process.

Disclaimer: The information provided in this handout is meant to be helpful and prepare you for the general nature of the process. It is not meant to advise you of every question that will be asked, and some aspects of the process may be modified, if necessary. Additionally, the information in this handout is not exhaustive. We encourage you to act upon whatever additional course of study or strategies you believe will enhance your chances of performing effectively.

NTN Overview

NTN Registration Process

- Visit National Testing Network (nationaltestingnetwork.com) to register for an account.
- Schedule a test via NTN at any convenient testing location (or Virtual Testing).
 - If you would like to test virtually, you will need to [check system requirements](#) to make sure your system meets **all** requirements and to test your system.
- Complete the Public Safety Self Assessment (PSSA) Part 1 and Part 2 after registering in the NTN portal. You will find the PSSA in your NTN candidate account.

Testing Location Details

If you are testing in-person (as opposed to virtually): some testing facilities offer **ALL computer-based testing** (no paper-based testing). Computer-based testing locations have individual computers and headphones. Answers are entered electronically.

Other locations will be classroom testing, with a shared video projected on a large screen. Everyone completes the test at the same pace, and you record your responses onto a Scantron bubble answer sheet, using a pencil.

Test as soon as you can. If you wait until the end of the testing period, you may have to drive farther or test at an inconvenient time for an available testing slot. **Complete your test by the closing date.**

What to Expect at the Testing Center

- **You will receive an email receipt after you schedule your exam with important, detailed test center/testing instructions. Be sure to check your junk/spam email folder if you do not see the email right away.**
- **You MUST show up on time;** if you are late, you will be considered as a ‘no-show.’ NTN recommends arriving 30 minutes ahead of time so there is time to complete the check in process prior to testing.
- **Please allow ample time for parking.** At most sites, there is parking nearby, but if the testing center is busy, you may need to park a little farther away. Please be prepared to pay for parking.
- **No cell phones allowed in the room.** Candidates bring NOTHING into the testing room.
- **Candidates must know their log-in credentials** (created by you when you registered with NTN) for testing at a computer location.
- **NTN will supply all testing materials needed** (pencils- if applicable, headphones, etc.).
- **This is a standardized testing environment,** which means no talking, no firearms, no cell phones, no jackets, no hats or hoods, no vape pens, no watches, no water/food, and no personal items of any kind. NTN will provide everything needed for testing.
- **Cheating in any form is prohibited.**
- **No bathroom breaks are allowed during the test.** Should a candidate need to use the restroom, the test will NOT stop.
- Candidates should bring:

- Themselves, VALID government issued photo ID (**names must match exactly with your NTN account**), all/any NTN usernames and passwords (these are CANDIDATE created when you schedule your exam, NTN will not have the ability to look up this information or reset it).
- It is highly recommended candidates know the email address they used to create their NTN account in the event they need to reset a password last minute (this is done via the NTN website by the candidate; proctors cannot assist with this process for security purposes).
- It is also recommended that candidates bring a copy of the EMAIL confirmation they receive when they schedule their test. This paper will not be allowed in the testing room.

What to Expect When Testing Virtually

- **Review the NTN Virtual Testing Instructions [here](#)** before scheduling a virtual test.
- **You will receive an email after you schedule your exam with important detailed testing instructions.**
- In order to test virtually, you need to download the NTN kiosk program prior to your scheduled testing appointment. When it is time for the test to start, you log in to the kiosk program.
- **You MUST log in and ‘show up’ on time**, if you are late, you will be considered as a ‘no-show.’
- **Grant full access to your computer and your web camera**, both audio and video, to our proctor during your exam.
- **A closed, quiet, private room**, with high-speed internet that is well-lit, and uncluttered with a single entrance/exit door that fully closes.
- **A mirror at least 5 inches wide that can be held up to your computer.**
- **No cell phones or other electronics allowed in the room (this includes smart speakers/smart home assistants).**
- **Multiple monitors are NOT allowed.**
- **Wireless headphones are NOT allowed.**
- **Sunglasses and hats are NOT allowed.**
- **Food and drink are NOT allowed.**
- **Vape pens are NOT allowed.**
- **Paper and pencil or pens are NOT allowed.**
- **Candidates must know their log-in credentials** (provided to you during registration for NTN) for virtual testing.
- **This is a standardized testing environment**, which means no personal items of any kind.
- **Cheating in any form is prohibited.**
- **No bathroom breaks are allowed during the test.** If you leave the view of the proctor at any time, the proctor will end your exam.
- Candidates should bring:
 - Themselves, VALID government issued photo ID (**names must match exactly with your NTN account**).

NTN Firefighting Testing System

Overview

NTN's Firefighter Testing System was developed to measure specific aptitudes important to firefighter and emergency response occupations. You will be taking five testing components. The first is the Public Safety Self Assessment (PSSA) Part 1 and Part 2 that you can complete online in your candidate account after you register with NTN. The following four components: Human Relations Video Test, a Mechanical Test, a Math Test, and a Reading test, will be taken at a testing location or proctored via virtual testing.

Character is important in the fire service. You will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement stating that you have not and will not violate test security through coaching or exchange of specific information about test items. Breach of this agreement is subject to prosecution under federal copyright law and would be viewed as an unacceptable integrity failure for an employee or prospective employee.

If testing at a location where there is video projected (not online), the answer sheet you will use is machine scored. Only mark one answer for each question and fill in the bubble completely. If you mark more than one answer, you will get the question wrong.

Regardless of where you test, if you don't know the answer to a question, the best strategy is to guess, because you may get it right anyway, and you will definitely get it wrong if you don't answer.

Video-Based Human Relations Test

(Approximately 60 Minutes)

The Video Human Relations Test focuses on teamwork and human relations. It was specifically designed for the fire service. Test items were developed through rigorous research with many panels of experienced fire service professionals. Experience is not required to answer the questions in this test. Common sense is always your best guide. You will watch a video segment and then choose the BEST course of action in a multiple-choice format.

If at a testing location where the video is projected, the items play without stopping. After each question is presented, you will have a brief period to mark the answer you think is best before the next question is presented. You will see each question only once.

If at an online testing location, or testing virtually, the items play without stopping. After each question is presented, you will have a brief period to select the best answer using the mouse.

You don't need fire service experience to answer these questions. The test is not intended in any way to test knowledge of policies or technical aspects of the job. Any such information that may be needed to answer a question is provided in the test. You are not expected to know anything other than what is stated. Base your answers only on information given in the test and your own common sense.

Video Human Relations Test Instructions

These are the instructions for taking the Video Human Relations Test. These instructions will also be presented to you on video at the time of the actual testing.

This is a human relations video test that has two parts. In Part I, you will see video scenarios depicting firefighters. Each scenario is followed by a question with four answers. In part II, you'll be asked your opinion about firefighters you saw in Part I. This is a human relations test focusing on teamwork and public relations. It's a test of your common sense.

You don't need experience to answer these questions. This is not a test of your knowledge of any particular policy, codes, or technical aspects of the job. Any information like that, that may be needed to answer a question, will be provided in the test. For instance, at times it is stated that certain personal protective equipment is required. You are not expected to know anything other than what is stated. Base your answers only on information given in the test and your own common sense.

This is a test. *It is not in any way intended as training or as an example of how firefighters and rescue personnel should handle their jobs. Firefighters may or may not be demonstrating good performance. Sometimes, you will see firefighters who make poor choices about what to do. Answer each question based on everything you have seen and heard in the video up to that point. Choose the BEST option from the four available answers. Don't get stuck thinking about answer choices that are not available to you.*

Also keep in mind, there are no trick questions. Although all the answers may not be equal in terms of common sense, they would all be choices available to the firefighters in the scenarios. In no case is an answer wrong because the choice would not be possible.

Pay attention to the behaviors and actions of the firefighters and supervisors you see in the scenarios, and consider how it would feel to work with these individuals. In Part II, you will be asked your opinion about many of the characters that you saw. Keep this in mind as you watch Part I.

Mechanical Reasoning Test

(30 Minutes)

The Mechanical Test is a multiple-choice mechanical aptitude test presented on video. You will see an introduction to a simple system, in the form of an animated brick making factory, and then be asked questions about the factory. Most of the questions are about basic mechanical objects such as valves, and principles such as water pressure. You will also be asked to answer troubleshooting type questions and observe system operations for problems. All of the questions can be answered based on common sense and observation of how everyday objects work. The Mechanical Reasoning Test is also timed.

If at a testing location where the video is projected, the items play without stopping. After each question is presented, you will have a brief period to mark the answer you think is best before the next question is presented. You will see each question only once.

If at an online testing location, or testing virtually, the items play without stopping. After each question is presented, you will have a brief period to select the best answer using the mouse.

Math Test

(14 Minutes)

The Math Test is based on the basic math skills one would need to be a successful firefighter. Questions are presented aloud, so you must listen carefully. If at a testing location where the video is projected, you will be asked to write your answers on your answer sheet in the space provided, and then later you will be given time to bubble those answers in. If at an online testing location, the items play without stopping. For the first part of the Math Test, after each question is presented, you will have a brief period to type your answer into the text box. The last part of the Math Test requires that you select the best answer using the mouse.

Questions relate to calculating basic subtraction, division, and multiplication. The last section asks you to figure proportions. If testing at a test location with an answer sheet, after all the questions are presented, you will be given time to bubble in the answers you have written. All answers must be bubbled on your bubble answer sheet to receive credit.

Reading Test

(6 Minutes)

For the Reading Test, you will be asked to answer multiple-choice reading questions. This test is designed specifically for firefighters, a job requiring ongoing study of difficult and technical materials. The test is based on actual job materials. You will be required to read a passage and choose the words that best fit in the blanks. You will have 6 minutes to complete the Reading Test.

If at a testing location where the video is projected, you will fill in the bubbles on your answer sheet that correspond with the correct answer. If at a computer-based testing location or virtual testing, you will select the correct answer from a drop-down menu.

Here is an example using a sentence from the paragraph above:

Example		Choices			
		A	B	C	D
This test is designed					
___1___ for firefighters,	1.	never	specifically	usually	as
a ___2___ requiring on-	2.	job	test	vehicle	suspect
going study of difficult and					
technical materials.					

Correct Responses:

For each of the blanks, only one of the answers provided makes sense. The only answers that make sense in the above example are:

1. b (specifically)
2. a (job)

Public Safety Self Assessment (PSSA)

The Public Safety Self Assessment (Part 1 and Part 2) is a two-part test that is a component of the Firefighter Testing System. Candidates access this test through their NTN Candidate Account.

Both parts of the PSSA must be taken online. Once you begin the test the timer will start and cannot be stopped. Part 1 and Part 2 do not need to be taken consecutively. After each question is presented, you will have a brief period to select the best answer using the mouse or the keyboard (please refer to respective instructions).

Part 1 (60 minutes)

You will be asked to read statements and respond with how much you agree or disagree with the statement. You will have one hour to complete all the questions and you must complete them all in one sitting. The test is timed. You cannot skip any questions. Once the timer starts, it does not stop.

Part 2 (90 minutes)

This exam has four parts with various question types. It includes a variety of multiple-choice questions including, but not limited to, reviewing and making judgments about situations in photographs and reading statements and responding with how much you agree or disagree. You must complete all of the questions/sections all in one sitting. The test is timed. You cannot skip any questions. Once the timer starts, it does not stop.

Test Taking Tips

The NTN Firefighter Testing System includes multiple-choice questions. To get the highest score, always select the best choice listed, even if more than one seems good to you. Be sure to read all answers before deciding your final answer. Don't focus on a choice that is not given to you. Don't get distracted by thinking of other possible responses that are not among the choices presented. Don't get stuck on the idea that you want to combine two responses. Show your judgment by picking the one answer that, by itself, is better than any other answer, by itself.

Prepare yourself physically and mentally for your exam as you would prepare yourself for any special assignment that requires concentration. Get the amount of sleep that will leave you most alert. It's also a good idea to eat a nutritious and hearty meal to help you stay focused throughout your exam. Unusual changes in your routine may cause you problems during your exam. For example, consuming more caffeine than usual may make you jittery; less than usual may leave you listless. Try to remain calm and relaxed before and during your exam. If you feel anxious, take a few moments to calm yourself down.

Here are some additional tips to help you during the exam. These simple procedures will help you avoid marking the wrong answer when you know the right one.

- 1. Listen to the instructions.** Before you begin the exam, it is important that you read and/or listen to all instructions carefully. Ensure you know how to correctly fill out the answer sheet. Specific instructions will be provided at the time of the test.
- 2. Read all of the answers before choosing one.** The most common answer people choose is **a**, whether it is right or not. That is because they think the first answer looks okay, so they stop reading. Don't make the mistake of not reading all answers before making a selection. Even if **a** looks like a really good answer, one of the other answers may be better. When you read the other alternatives, you may think of something you had missed at first.
- 3. Use process of elimination.** If you aren't sure of the correct answer, use process of elimination. Eliminate answer choices that you know are definitely wrong. Then focus on selecting the best answer from the choices remaining.
- 4. Do not read something into the question that is not there.** On a situational question, assume that everything is normal unless the question tells you differently. Assume that the pavement is dry; visibility is good; your supervisor is competent; and citizens are behaving normally. When something is amiss, the question will tell you. Stick to the facts of the questions.
- 5. Answer every question.** There is no penalty for guessing. Even if you don't know the correct answer, you have one chance in four of choosing the right one. If you can eliminate one or two of the alternatives, your chances are even better.

6. **Fill out your answer sheet correctly (if applicable).** In marking the answer sheet, be sure to fill in the blank that corresponds to the answer you have chosen. If you skip a question, make sure you skip to the right space on the answer sheet. If you mark the wrong answer and want to change it, erase your first mark completely. Remember to only mark *one* answer for each question.
7. **Ask your Test Proctor.** A test proctor will be available during the exam to help you with the testing procedures; however, he or she will not explain the meaning of any question, define words, or give information which may be of help in answering a question.

Practice Test

For more information and practice answering questions from the human relations, mechanical, reading and math components, you can take the [Practice Test](#). This valuable information is compiled by National Testing Networks' testing experts who are also the developers of the test. Make sure you are ready by reviewing a complete discussion of right and wrong answers for the practice questions. You can take the basic practice test twice for \$24.99 or take the extended practice test twice for \$38.99.

The Basic Practice Test

- 5 Human Relations video items and explanations
- 12-item Mechanical Aptitude Test and explanations
- 15-item Reading Test
- 7-item Math Test

The Extended Practice Test

- 20 Human Relations video items and explanations
- 12-item Mechanical Aptitude Test and explanations
- 30-item Reading Test
- 14-item Math Test